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Kabul 'inaction' prompted border closure, says PM

• Asserts what is 'good for Afghanistan is good for Pakistan'; tells Afghan Taliban they must decide whether to co-exist peacefully, or not

• Insists 'good Taliban, bad Taliban' distinction buried for good; questions post-2018 terror resurgence in KP

• Premier arrives in Davos for World Economic Forum; Aurangzeb meets UAE minister on sidelines

Dawn Report

ISLAMABAD: Pakistan was "forced" to halt all trade with Afghanistan due to Kabul's inaction against terrorists operating from its soil, Prime Minister Shehbaz Sharif said on Tuesday.

"There is a complete blockade of Pak-Afghan trade. It should not have been there, but they forced us," the premier said while addressing a delegation from Khyber Pakhtunkhwa, who were attending a national workshop in Islamabad.

Trump vows 'no going back' on Greenland: Page 12

"This time, it must be decided whether Afghanistan wants to live peacefully or not […] They are our brothers and sisters. If the interim Afghan government does not have an interest in this (peace with Pakistan), they should at least have mercy on its people and not oppress them."

"Rest assured, we will keep trying our best," the prime minister added.

"It is our neighbouring country, we have to live forever […] what is good for Afghanistan is good for Pakistan, and vice versa," the PM remarked.

He called it unfortunate that the past and the incumbent Afghan governments "did not cherish the hospitality" offered by Pakistan.

PM Shehbaz added that while international aid was received for the four million Afghan refugees in Pakistan, the country also had to use its own resources.

He further said that Pakistan did no favour to the Afghan people, rather fulfilled its responsibilities.

"But the way they are paying us back is very upsetting," the prime minister added.

PM Shehbaz noted that the 2020 Doha accord was "very clear" in stating that Afghanistan will rein in terrorist activity in the country and will not allow any terrorist to operate from their territory.

Recalling ministers' various meetings held with Afghan leaders, the premier lamented, "But they did not adhere to a single one of our recommendations."

Recalling the Pak-Afghan border clashes of October 2025 and the subsequent rounds of talks that failed, he said, "Nothing came of it. We had only one demand that you commit to rein in all terrorist outfits and proxies, whether it is the TTP, BLA, or the resources provided to them by India's support."

"Unfortunately, they did not make any

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(CLOCKWISE from left) Prime Miniser Shehbaz Sharif is greeted by officials upon his arrival in Switzerland; Canadian premier Mark Carney greets French President Emmanuel Macron prior to a bilateral meeting; and, US Commerce Secretary Howard Lutnick (L) and UK's Chancellor of the Exchequer Rachel Reeves participate in a discussion, during the World Economic Forum annual meeting in Davos.—APP/AFP

PML-N senator sees officials' hand in Nadra, FBR data leak

• Senator Afnanullah Khan claims up-to-date datasets are available on 'dark web' • Committee chair suggests banning social media platforms who do not cooperate when asked to take down 'terrorist accounts'

Dawn Report

ISLAMABAD: A lawmaker from the ruling PML-N claimed on Tuesday that there had to be some officials connivance at play, as he highlighted the theft of Pakistanis' personal data, saying that it was available on the dark web.

Senator Afnanullah Khan made the remarks during a meeting of the Senate Standing Committee on Interior.

"It is the latest data… and it is such good data that we might not have such well-processed data. For example, they have consolidated data from the National Database and Registration Authority (Nadra), the Federal Board of Revenue (FBR) and banks in a dataset," he said.

"And you can get anyone's data for Rs500, and if you want that of the entire country, you will get it for Rs70-80 billion. Data worth Rs70-80bn is [available] on the dark web," the senator said.

The dark web refers to websites that are not indexed by search engines, and are usually encrypted, only accessible through specialised browsers. This heightened anonymity makes it a hotbed for illegal activities, such as drug and/or arms sales, fraud and data theft etc.

Senator Afnanullah pointed out that when the data of any individual was stolen, it could be used for any purpose, including obtaining passports and identity cards for others.

"Why is Pakistanis' data stolen time and again?" he asked.

Addressing Mustafa Jamal Kazi of the Directorate General of Immigration and Passports, he added: "Let me tell you one thing; without the [involvement of] people inside the organisation, data theft at such a large scale is not possible. It is impossible. The data of 240 million people cannot be stolen just like that."

Later, speaking to *Dawn*, the PML-N senator asserted that this data could not have been leaked without the involvement of officials in the Nadra and Immigration and Passports Directorate General.

In the meeting, Committee Chairperson and PTI Senator Faisal Saleem Rahman had asked Mr Kazi whether any investigation had been carried out in this regard.

Mr Kazi responded that a probe had been conducted and officials had also been removed.

Senator Rahman also stressed the need for ensuring the protection of law enforcement bodies'

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'Board of Peace' might replace UN, says Trump

By Anwar Iqbal

WASHINGTON: US President Donald Trump suggested on Tuesday that his proposed "Board of Peace" might one day replace the United Nations, which he described as "not very helpful", as he marked the first anniversary of his second term in office at the White House.

Speaking for more than an hour before taking questions from reporters, Trump said the UN had potential but added that he had never considered turning to the organisation to help resolve conflicts. Asked whether his envisioned Board of Peace could supplant the UN, he replied that it "might".

UAE, Bahrain accept invite to join 'Board of Peace': Page 12

Earlier in the day, Trump released a list of what he described as major achievements from his first year back in office, highlighting what he portrayed as successes in both domestic and foreign policy.

Public opinion polls released around the same time showed growing voter dissatisfaction with the administration's immigration policies.

Against that backdrop, the first 15 minutes of Trump's appearance in the White House briefing room appeared aimed at reshaping public opinion. Holding a stack of printouts detailing immigrants with criminal records detained by US authorities in Minnesota — labelled "the worst of the worst" — the president sought to argue that his immigration policies were producing concrete results.

Raja Nasir finally declared Senate opposition leader

• In his maiden speech, MWM leader calls for release of all political prisoners • Barrister Ali Zafar terms Senate 'now constitutionally complete' • Rana Sanaullah welcomes new opposition leader's 'balanced' tone; calls for dialogue, electoral reforms

By Iftikhar A. Khan

ISLAMABAD: Senate Chairman Yousaf Raza Gilani on Tuesday finally declared Majlis Wahdat-i-Muslimeen (MWM) chief Allama Raja Nasir Abbas as Leader of the Opposition, more than five months after the office fell vacant following the disqualification of Senator Shibli Faraz in August last year.

Mr Abbas, vice chairman of the Tehreek Tahafuz Ayeen-i-Pakistan (TTAP), had been chosen by PTI founder Imran Khan as the opposition's candidate for the seat.

"There being no legal bar, I now proceed in accordance with Rule 16 of the Rules of Procedure and Conduct of Business in the Senate, 2012, and declare Raja Nasir Abbas as Leader of the Opposition in the Senate, having secured the support of 22 out of 32 opposition members," he ruled amid desk-thumping and slogans.

Mr Gilani directed the Senate Secretariat to issue a formal notification immediately, which was complied with.

The declaration came a day after PTI parliamentary leader in the house, Barrister Syed Ali Zafar, wrote to the Senate chairman calling for the declaration of Raja Nasir Abbas as opposition leader at the earliest in the larger interest of parliamentary democracy and the proper functioning of the Senate. Mr Zafar had also met the Senate chairman and later disclosed that a notification for the appointment would be issued on Tuesday.

Explaining the delay, the Senate Chairman placed the legal and procedural background on record, saying that following the disqualification of Shibli Faraz by the Election Commission of Pakistan (ECP) on Aug 5 and the consequential notification by the Senate Secretariat on Aug 8, the office of the opposition leader had fallen vacant.

He said the notification was challenged before the Peshawar High Court, which issued a restraining order prohibiting further action in the matter. In view of the pendency of judicial proceedings, the issue remained under consideration at the Senate Secretariat for legal examination and procedural guidance.

Mr Gilani added that the course

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New framework to 'end enforced disappearances from Feb 1': Bugti

Balochistan cabinet okays detention rules, witness protection bill

By Saleem Shahid

QUETTA: Balochistan Chief Minister Sarfraz Bugti said on Tuesday the issue of missing persons had long been used as a propaganda tool against the state, adding that his government had now put in place a comprehensive legal framework to address the matter on a permanent basis.

Presiding over the 22nd meeting of the provincial cabinet at the Chief Minister's Secretariat, Mr Bugti said that despite similar or higher numbers of such cases in other provinces, particularly Khyber Pakhtunkhwa, the issue in Balochistan had been politically exploited for years without any serious effort to find a lasting solution.

The chief minister stressed that from Feb 1 onwards, no enforced disappearance would take place under the authority of the state or the government.

He maintained that the new legislation would help dispel allegations of enforced disappearances and counter negative propaganda directed at Pakistan. The chief minister said that security forces in Balochistan often operate in grey zones and conduct intelligence-based operations where suspects are detained for investigation. However, he added, the new legal framework would ensure transparency and accountability.

Mr Bugti clarified that if individuals were abducted by terrorist groups or went into hiding on their own, the responsibility could not be attributed to the state. He noted that courts and relevant commissions already existed to examine claims of enforced disappearance, but allegations were often amplified without verification to fuel anti-state narratives.

To address this, the cabinet approved the rules for the Balochistan Prevention of Detention and De-radicalisation Act, 2025. Under the law, designated centres have been established where suspects will be investigated under the supervision of authorised police officers, along with counselling aimed at countering extremism and anti-state indoctrination.

Families of those under investigation will be informed within 24 hours, allowed visitation and provided medical facilities. No individual will be shifted outside these centres.

During the meeting, the provincial cabinet also

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ON OTHER PAGES

Airspace ban on Indian jets extended

Pakistan's airspace will remain closed to Indian-registered aircraft till Feb 24, Pakistan Airports Authority has announced. The extension in the ban has been notified three days before its expiry. According to the latest Notam, the ban on Indian flights has been extended until Feb 24 at 5am. The ban would apply to aircraft owned, operated or leased by Indian airlines, including military flights. **Page 5**

Islamic bank, Pakistan ink $603m deals

The 306km M-6 Motorway worth $1.7 billion gets a boost after Pakistan and the Islamic Development Bank sign three financing agreements worth $603m. The agreements include financing for the Sukkur-Hyderabad Motorway, the Poverty Graduation of Extremely Poor and Flood-Affected Households Project, and the Out-of-School Children project for Azad Jammu and Kashmir. **Page 9**

Rescuers risk life and limb as Gul Plaza smoulders

• Toll rises to 28; rescuers say efforts to continue until all missing people found • Lawmakers play blame game in National Assembly, demand judicial probe into incident • Karachi mayor says action started against 'non-compliant' buildings; governor reassures traders

By Imtiaz Ali and Syed Irfan Raza

KARACHI/ISLAMABAD: Thick smoke continued to billow from the charred ruins of Gul Plaza as firefighters made frantic efforts to search for and rescue any survivors present in the wreckage of the shopping plaza, while the death toll rose to 28, with scores still missing.

The inferno, which reduced the building to ashes, also prompted a blame game in the National Assembly, as lawmakers demanded a judicial probe into the fire to fix accountability while also calling for empowered local bodies to improve governance.

A visit to the spot on Tuesday evening showed thick smoke emanating from the top floor of the plaza, while two snorkels were busy controlling the flames, which were not visible from outside the building.

POLICE and city officials look on as heavy machinery is used to comb through the rubble of the gutted Gul Plaza shopping mall, on Karachi's M.A. Jinnah Road.—Fahim Siddiqi / White Star

Rescue 1122 spokesperson Hassanul Haseeb Khan told *Dawn* that their team finally gained access to the building's basement, first and second floors, where rescue and search operations continued for the third day. He said the operation would continue until the recovery of the last missing person.

Police surgeon Dr Summaiya Syed told Dawn that the death toll had increased to 28, including "probably" five women. She said post-mortem examinations had been conducted on fragmentary human remains. Eight bodies had been identified, while 48 samples from relatives for DNA profiling and cross-matching had been collected.

More coverage on Metro Pages

120 shops gutted as fire engulfs Quetta shopping plaza: Page 5

South DIG Syed Asad Raza told Dawn that out of a total of 75 missing persons, the locations of 38 had been confirmed at Gul Plaza through geofencing. He said DNA samples had been sent to the University of Karachi lab, and cross-matching was expected to continue over the next two to three days.

Meanwhile, a committee formed by the Sindh government initiated its probe to ascertain the circumstances that led to the devastating fire, sources said. The committee, chaired by the Karachi commissioner, summoned relevant officials as well as the mall owner and sought details from them.

Mudslinging in NA

Meanwhile, lawmakers in the lower house of parliament used the incident for political mudslinging. The 18th Amendment also came under fire, as treasury benches claimed that the amendment had provided resources to the

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